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For the Belfast Monthly Magazine.

THE COURT OF JUNO....A VISION.

"Non omnibus dormio !"

HAVING promised an amiable young lady to write something in answer to a paper, with which most of the ladies have been displeased, inserted in the former numbers of the Belfast Magazine, I began to reflect one evening last week how this was to be done. I have ever made it a rule to perform scrupulously my promises to the ladies, but this being made rather hastily, I was not a little at a loss how to set about the task; sundry plans presented themselves to my imagination successively, and were in their turns dismissed, as deficient in some essential points. Wearied at last with reiterated comparisons, without any approach to selection, I at last fell asleep, and soon after, imagination seizing the reins which judgment had resigned, represented the night as already passed, and placed me in my parlour, engaged in some of the usual occupations of the day. A rap at the door shortly after announced the approach of visitors, and presently, to my surprize, four young ladies entered the room along with the lady above-mentioned. After the usual compliments were passed, they informed me, that there had been a meeting of the ladies of Ulster, to take into consideration the ill usage they had sustained in Jupiter's setting them up to auction; that as this auction still continued, and might do so for a long time, for aught they knew to the contrary, they had resolved to prevent it, by sending a message to Juno, to represent their case, and beg her assistance; but that as they had heard her usual residence was at a place called Samos, which was high up in the Levant sea, and was too far for ladies to travel to, they had agreed to entrust the commission to me; and as I had promised to assist their cause, they made it a point I should go. I urged many excuses, of its being a task I was not qualified for, that they would easily find a more competent ambassador, and many other pleas; but all in vain, every thing I could say was

overruled, and go I must. A vessel was provided in the port, a prime sailer, with all sails set, all hands at their stations, lying too, waiting for the boat, then on shore, to take me in. Every necessary was provided aboard, so that I had nothing to do but step into the boat; the ladies did me the honour to accompany me to the water side, and on parting, wished me a good voyage, presenting me at same time with a large packet of instructions to read on the way.

The boat soon reached the ship, and we started with a fine gale over the quarter. I staid on deck as long as I could see the ladies, who continued waving their handkerchiefs in token of good wishes, till we passed the next headland.

The ocean now opened to my view, but as it presented no novelty I went below, to view the ship, and was greatly surprized to find it laid out and constructed in every respect according to plans I had often thought of, but this not relating to the chief point of the business, any farther notice of it may be omitted.

Shortly after we had lost sight of land, I heard a loud noise, as if all the mail coachmen in the three kingdoms were sounding their horns at once. On running up on deck to see what it might be, I was presented with the fine sight, often described in the ancient poets, of the whole court of Neptune bearing down on us from the windward, and found the noise to proceed from the Tritons sounding their shells as a signal for us to bring to.

We fired twenty-one rounds by way of salute, to old Ocean's monarch, who presently came round under our lee; the ladder was let down and manned, and he then marched up, accompanied by Amphitrite, and several of the sea goddesses. He asked us where we were bound, and the captain referring him to me, I told the nature of my embassy in as few words as possible; whereupon he smiled very graciously, declared he had always a peculiar veneration for the Irish ladies, and would further the business as much as he could, and instantly dispatched a Triton to Eolus, with positive orders to give us favourable winds the whole way, and at the same time darting his

trident into the sea, ordered it to smooth its waves, and lie still as we passed: he then called for pen and ink to write a letter to his brother Jupiter, to be forwarded from the court of Juno. I reminded him that the thunderer was then in Ireland, amusing himself with auctions; but he said that did not signify, he might be home before long; or, if not, if we gave the letter to Hebe it would do as well for what he wanted, as she kept the keys of the cellar.

Pens and ink being brought, he sat down to write his letter, and we took that opportunity to pay our respects to the goddesses; we handed them down to the cabin, and laid our best wines before them; but they hoped we would excuse them in asking for something stronger, on account of the cold nature of their element. We instantly opened our liquor cases on this for their accommodation, and Amphitrite drank very freely of ratiée, but the rest of the goddesses preferred cherry brandy.

Thetis being one of the number, and knowing that she was a great favourite with Jupiter, and was often at levee, I thought it a good opportunity to get some intelligence from her of the present politics of the court of Olympus: I accordingly requested some information on this head, which she gave with great affability and good-nature. She said that matters were greatly altered there since Homer's time. That all the gods and goddesses were now grown perfectly polite, and had entirely laid aside the coarse manners and vulgar language which was then in fashion. That Juno and Jupiter had separate establishments, and seldom met but on public occasions and state days, but then always behaved to each other with the greatest civility; that however Jupiter was as much afraid of a scolding as ever, and Juno still preserved the ascendancy; which perhaps was in a good measure owing to her so seldom making use of sharp words; that she passed most of her time with Diana and Minerva; that the Muses were often of the party, and altogether formed a most delightful society. That the rest of the gods

and goddesses went on pretty much in the old way. Apollo was still as fond of driving as ever, and intended to be president of the four-in-hand club; he devoted his evenings, however, to music, and that having tried all instruments in succession, he had lately laid them all by for the Irish harp, which was his present favourite. That Bacchus was not fit company for ladies, especially since he used so much tobacco, and therefore she seldom saw him; but had heard, that after having been greatly addicted to punch for many years since the introduction of spirituous liquors, he had again returned to wine, and preferred good old port to all other liquors. That as to Venus, it was not to be supposed any of the modest goddesses knew any thing of her; but as we must pass near her favourite island, it was probable we should hear something of her on the way. Nothing particular had happened to the rest of the divinities, except that Hebe had again been reinstated in her office, and the young gentleman who held her place was dismissed in disgrace.

By this time Neptune had finished his letter, and I was called on deck to receive it; and the goddesses all came up at the same time. Neptune then gave me the letter, with many charges to see that it was sent to Hebe, if Jupiter was not at Olympus. The sea chariots were then all called up; we handed the goddesses into theirs, and Neptune followed. They all set off at full speed; we gave them three cheers, and another salute of twenty-one guns, which was returned by a general flourish from the tritons on their shells.

Neptune's letter being open, I read the contents, which were as follows:

"Neptune, emperor of all the seas, to his sublime eminence, Jupiter, emperor of the earth and air, and his well-beloved brother:

"Dear Jove,

"It is a long time since I troubled you, nor did I think I should have occasion now, but you will soon see how the case is, and will then excuse me. The purport of this letter is to draw on you for my arrears of nectar, which have been lying over for many years;

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which happened, because as long as I could get right Nantz, I preferred it, as agreeing best with the sea; but now I can get no more, as the English have for some time fallen into Bonaparte's snare, and have put his decrees in force against themselves, and all commerce is nearly at an end, and no brandy is now to be had for money; what little I get is in presents from the British sailors, but I am loath to deprive the jolly dogs of the liquor they love best; they are my chief favourites; they have annihilated all the fleets of the world, and I now seldom hear a gun fired in my dominions.

"Their success is really wonderful, considering how little their high mightinesses the admiralty have done to assist them on shore, and with what extreme obstinacy all improvements in the naval arts have been repressed by them; what a pity, that hearts of oak should be thus at the mercy of heads of leather! At present I am obliged to drink port, which is but a thin liquor for me, and even this supply, I fear, will be soon cut off, for Douro, of Talavera, is in full retreat either to Corunna, or some such port; and when the remains of his army are embarked, the English will not fail, as usual, to shut up the Portuguese ports against themselves and the rest of the world. I therefore am obliged to write for my allowance of nectar as aforesaid, and beg you will send me by the first ship forty pipes of the strongest Olympus particular. I send this open, that Hebe may forward the above, if you should not be in the way, as I am in great need of good liquor: in that case she will hand this to you on your arrival, and you may debit my account accordingly. Your's ever, Dear Jove,
NEPTUNE."

I had almost forgot to mention, that I took an opportunity, in conversing with Thetis, to inquire about the mermaid who lately was seen in the British seas. She assured me it was the same mermaid of which an account is given by Autolicus, in one of Shakespeare's plays, and whose appearance then was attested by five justices. I asked what might be her business in the channel? She said, she could not be certain, but supposed she might be going

on a visit to Mareen Roe, at Shane's-castle, who was a near relation of hers. I then asked how she contrived to get there? and was answered, that she usually swam up the river Bann; that if she met with any falls or Salmon-leaps in her way, she sprang over them at a single bound, thinking nothing of leaping forty feet clear out of the water. I thought this rather a bounce, I must confess, but did not think it polite to contradict a goddess.

The good effects of Neptune's message to Eolus now became evident; a fine steady gale sprung up N.W. and by N. and the sea continuing as smooth as a mill-pond by the same favour, we set all our studding sails, and scudded away at a most amazing rate. The wind continued in this point till we came abreast of the straits, when it came round more to the west, and we soon made Gibraltar.

Here we cast anchor, to take in water, which being effected, and our anchor-a-peak again in a few hours, we once more got under way, and proceeded with our former rapidity.

We had before long a distant view of the smoking top of Stromboli, and shortly after saw the sublime exhibition of Mount Etna, in full eruption.

Having passed Sicily and Malta, we steered for the archipelago, and soon came in view of the charming islands of Greece; but had scarcely begun to distinguish them plainly, when we discovered several boats advancing towards us. The captain took his glass to see what they might be, but soon laid it down again, saying, "our voyage is now at an end, for we are just on the point of being carried in captives to that distant island." These words were, however, spoken with a smiling countenance, and an air which by no means coincided with the misfortune he announced.

But my attention was now drawn off to the boats that approached the ship, which to my astonishment appeared to be rowed towards us by females; and as they came nearer, my surprize increased, as I beheld them more distinctly.

The boats were of large size, and of the most beautiful form, painted in the

gayest manner, and adorned with carved and gilt ornaments, of the most elegant designs; on benches covered with cushions of pink sattin, sat the most lovely and exquisitely formed young females I ever beheld, arrayed in fanciful draperies of white muslin, disposed so as to heighten every beauty it displayed, and add the colouring of warm imagination to those it concealed: with oars of cedar they gently, yet swiftly, pressed forward to delicious music from the softest and mellowest flutes. When near enough they hailed the ship, and we informed them we were from Ireland, and bound to Samos. "Then gentlemen," they replied, "if you please, you must first visit Paphos, where our queen and mistress, the goddess Cythera expects you; we are sent out to fetch you in, and hope you will make no resistance." The captain informed them in return, "that we were their humble slaves, and should not refuse to submit to that power which all nature obeyed," and immediately ordered the men to fire a salute in honour of their mistress, and haul down their colours in token of submission. "Stop, gentlemen, cried the beautiful nymphs, fire not, these are not the salutes we use at Paphos, we thought Irishmen did not require to be taught how to salute the ladies;" immediately on this they leaped on board, with the utmost grace and agility, and saluted us all in their fashion, which is the same as that of our warm-hearted country, where the friendly and innocent lip is still presented, and the icy refinement of the petrifying cheek does not yet prevail. "Gentlemen, they cried, you are now our prisoners. The principal of you must go ashore directly, in one of our boats, and we will take care to bring the ship and men safe into port shortly after you." It would be in vain to resist, nor indeed did we ever think of it, as no conquest is so complete as that over the will.

The captain and I were soon seated in one of their boats, and ten of the young beauties prepared to bring us to the shore, we offered to assist at the oars, but this they would not permit, and we instantly set off, leaving the ship to the guidance of the other nymphs.

The charms of the ladies prevented me from noticing any thing else hitherto; but I now discovered, that there were among them several little boys, of the most gracefully and beautiful forms, and on looking more earnestly, I saw they bore little wings on their shoulders, softer and more white than the snowy down of the cygnet's neck. I now perceived who they were, and trembled at their well known power, while I admired their beauty. I was surprized, however, that none of them carried bows or quivers, or the fatal darts so much dreaded by all; and one of them in his gambols round the boat coming near me, I could not forbear asking why they appeared without their usual arms, especially when they came out to take prisoners; with a lovely smile he replied; "these arms you talk of were laid aside some centuries ago, we have long since learned that no weapons are more effectual than those furnished by the eyes of the ladies, for distant encounters; but for closer contests we use the galvanism of beauty." You speak strange language. Is galvanism, which has lately been applied to so many extraordinary purposes, to become one of your weapons also? "It has been so, long before the word was known in Europe," replied he; "but you will cease to wonder when I explain to you how it operates." The little fellow then most philosophically explained the whole matter, but this part of the history must be reserved for the transactions of The Royal Society, this not being a fit place for philosophical dissertations. After this discourse, I clearly understood how Socrates became affected in the remarkable manner (he has described so particularly) when reading along with Aspasia; and comprehended the origin of that gentle flame he mentions, which seeming to proceed from her beautiful arm leaning on his shoulder, softly by degrees pervaded his whole frame. I understood also many other instances of a similar nature, but of more modern date, which had before puzzled me not a little; and now saw that the poets have been only describing real facts, when we have supposed them to be romancing, and that those flames and fires of love, of which they have writ-

ten so feelingly, far from being imaginary, had an existence perfectly real; our error respecting them only consisting in supposing those mentioned to be of the nature of gross culinary fires, and therefore only metaphorical, whereas in fact they are those gentle galvanic flames, which warm without consuming, and produce the most powerful effects by causes almost imperceptible. Hence arose the error stated in the popular song of the Little Lovers:

"Then the little maid replied,
Should I be your little bride?
Pray what should we have for to eat?
Will the flame that you're so rich in
Light a fire in the kitchen!
Or the little god of love turn the
meat."

Those gross ideas proceeding entirely from confounding two fires totally distinct in their nature.

Lastly, this account of the matter, by the smiling boy, explained to me a mysterious advice given me by a sage; whom I had the good fortune to have both as the director of my studies and my friend, in my boyish days; to impress the advice on my memory, he took the trouble to put it in verse, so as to form a didactic poem, of which the following are the two first verses.

ADVICE OF THE SAGE, * * * * *

TO HIS PUPIL.

UNLESS wise Boscovith is wrong,
Round every atom is a sphere,
Where its attraction is most strong,
Which lessens farther or more near;
Suppose this system to amend,
That love itself an atom is,
And mighty uses, I contend,
Will flow from this hypothesis.
At two feet distance round the Fair,
Describe the circle, A. B. C.
This we may fairly call the sphere,
Of greatest sensibility;
When once the pains of love begin,
With care avoid this dangerous space,
Keep far without, or close within,
You'll get relief in either case;
To mitigate love's cruel pains,
A hard and weighty problem is,
My *datum* two solutions gains,
By Analysis and Synthesis.

While these reflections passed in my mind, the boat had reached the shore. On landing, the captain took leave of me, going off to join his men, with most of the nymphs from the boat, to ano-

ther part of the island, where the ship was to be brought into port.

Two of the nymphs proceeded with me to the internal part of the island, to the palace of their queen, according to their orders. The ground, as we advanced, was covered with a profusion of flowers, and flowering shrubs in abundance presented themselves on every side, which perfumed the air to the highest degree. The branches of the trees were covered with myriads of pairs of billing turtle doves, and innumerable sparrows flitted across the intervals; on the larger boughs numerous monkeys played their gambols. The gazelle, the antelope, the zebra, and wild horse, sported on the verdant plains, and in the distance flocks of ostriches, passed across with the speed of arrows. The air was of that temperature, which caused a pleasing languor, and every object inspired ideas of pleasure and repose.

After passing through a few miles of beautiful scenes of this nature, a magnificent palace of white marble appeared in view, surrounded on three sides by lofty groves. It was of the richest species of the Corinthian order, and folding doors of copper gilt, highly ornamented with fanciful devices, admitted us to a spacious vestibule, where a crowd of beautiful nymphs received us. After waiting here a short time, I was ordered in to the presence, and a nymph more sumptuously attired than those I had yet seen, came forward to conduct me. Another pair of golden doors were thrown open, and the queen of beauty appeared before my astonished eyes in all the splendour of her charms.

The apartment was spacious, the walls were covered with immense mirrors, disposed in the intervals of magnificent columns of variegated marble, with gold capitals and bases; a rich Turkey carpet covered the floor, and ottomans overspread with crimson velvet, bordered with deep gold fringe, surrounded the space, where hundreds of nymphs of superior beauty, waited on the commands of their queen. But as the stars are no more seen, when the sun rises from the ocean, so was their charms eclipsed by those of the divine Cytherea, who was seated at the head of the room, on a sofa of

highly wrought ivory, raised on two steps of Parian marble, covered as the other furniture, with crimson velvet. She was above the middle size, and every limb and every feature was formed with such exquisite grace, and perfection of beauty, as to be separately a study for an artist; the whole united, produced a most dazzling effect, and I stood motionless, with astonishment and admiration.

She perceived my embarrassment, and with a sweet look of encouragement, from her large blue eyes, ordered me to approach, in a voice of inexpressible harmony and softness. I directly obeyed, and was preparing to kneel at the foot of the throne, when with the kindest condescension she ordered me to be seated on an ottoman near its steps, observing "that she left to the haughty Juno the dominion of pride, and contented herself with the homage of the heart." I now was sufficiently relieved from surprise at her beauty, to be able to observe her dress, which was of the simplest form, of muslin shaded with a flowing mantle of light blue silk, without any ornament but that of her splendid zone, richly set with jewels of immense value, and a single wreath of brilliants binding her auburn tresses.

With a divine smile she then inquired the design of my voyage into those seas. I informed her as briefly as I could, to what my embassy to the court of Juno related, and concluding that the Queen of Beauty could not but be favourable to the cause of my fair countrywomen, who by their charms at least, seemed to share largely in her gifts. I solicited her interest with that goddess in their favour, having little doubt of receiving a propitious answer, and considerable aid in my suit; but was somewhat disappointed with her reply, when she informed me: "That my countrywomen were no favourites of hers, nor did she feel much inclination to befriend them; that they preferred the favours of Minerva and Diana to hers, and to them it might apply; for her part she could not enter into the merit of those prudish virtues, which were confined by domestic fetters, and of those were their chief boast. That I must know well that a faithful discharge of conjugal duties

was no recommendation to her, on the contrary, the reciprocal endearments of family ties, appeared to her quite ridiculous. If my countrywomen were the most faithful and affectionate wives, the most dutiful daughters, and the tenderest mothers in the world, could I suppose that would please her? the greater their excellence in these respects, the more disagreeable they were to her, and it was owing to this very excellency, which she well knew they eminently possessed, that they had so little of her favour: that at all events, even if, she was inclined to serve their suit, she had no power; that she and Juno were, as of old, of opposite parties; she being in the French interest, while Juno and Minerva espoused the English cause. That she very seldom went to Ireland, for the reasons before mentioned, and took little interest in it, having such ample amusement in the French and English capitals, between which she usually divided her winters; that she had lately a political quarrel with Juno; for that having formed a plan to serve her friends, the French, at the expense of the English, she had employed her emissary Mary Anne Clark, to use the influence with which she had purposely furnished her, for the overthrow of the British army, by the promotion of incompetent and ignorant persons to the rank of officers, who could not fail to lead their men into every disaster and disgrace, when brought into the field against the well selected commanders of Napoleon; who, in their promotion, considered their individual merit as soldiers alone, not their connections with his senate, or the weight of their purses. That the business was proceeding as well as could be wished, and numbers of officers of the above description were appointed in the British army; when Britannia became so much alarmed, that she applied personally to Juno, who instantly dispatched Minerva to her assistance; that Minerva had brought forward her friend Colonel Wardle, by whose exertions in the senate, the nation were made sensible of the plot, and the matter ended for the present, by the changes which took place in consequence of the discovery. That Juno had been very angry with

her for the part she took in the affair; but this she did not mind, and that though they had contrived to seduce her emissary from her service, she knew how to make even her serviceable to her cause in spite of them; that though she would delay the punishment her perfidy deserved, in the end she intended to punish her severely, by disgrace and poverty at the close of her life; and in the mean time would cause her to betray her new friend, the colonel, after leading him into such indiscretions as would lessen his influence considerably; if not totally destroy it."

I could not help feeling somewhat hurt at the contempt with which the goddess talked of our military; and as our famous expedition for Walcheren was then fitting out, I mentioned it with some exultation, stating the prodigious preparations made, the great pains taken by ministers, who even attended on the embarkation in person, and had spared no expense to render every thing complete; adding also what was expected from the favour of Providence on the undertaking, from the prayers of the pious Chancellor of the Exchequer, who was known to be most powerful in prayer; and also from the prayers of Mr. Wilberforce, and all his evangelical friends, who were heartily disposed to spare no efforts in this way for its success; hoping that all this would induce her divinityship to talk of our affairs with somewhat more respect.

But I was still more mortified, when she burst into a loud and long continued fit of laughter, and then observed, that she had contrived a method to render this fine expedition perfectly abortive, by the simplest means imaginable; that she had applied to Morpheus to personate his great votary and worshipper, the noble commander of the expedition, and lead the army in his place (which was no great difficulty, as there was such a resemblance in their persons and manners, that one might be easily taken for the other;) and that at the present moment Morpheus was in actual command in Walcheren, while his lordship was snug in his bed in London, locked up in a private apartment; and that perhaps I might see something more of this business

on my way back. That as to the prayers of the Evangelicals, or, as they were more properly called by the people, the Jellysculls; the old fable of Jupiter and the waggoner would explain what was to be expected from indolent prayers, unaided by any manly effort to further their design.

She then concluded, by returning to the business of my embassy; saying, that though she was no friend to my countrywomen, for the reasons already stated, yet that in consideration to the zeal I had manifested in the cause of her sex, she would do the only thing she could to assist me, and would therefore dispense with my performing the usual residence of forty days in her island, which all men who landed there were obliged to do by an ancient law; but as she could not possibly dismiss the captain and his crew till after that time, she would order one of her light vessels to be ready to convey me on the next morning, to the present residence of Juno, which was then not at Samos, as I supposed, but at Delos, where she and Minerva were both on a visit to Diana, with whom they now spent much of their time. Saying this, she rose from her throne, commended me to the care of her nymphs, and wishing me a good voyage, retired to an inner apartment; after first graciously presenting me her divine hand to kiss.

The touch of this celestial hand, the model of beauty and perfection, occasioned a delicious sensation so powerful, as for some time to deprive me of recollection, and when I recovered, the goddess was no more to be seen, and I found myself again surrounded by her nymphs; who, in a most obliging manner led me to a saloon, where a table lay spread with a variety of exquisite dishes, an abundance of the finest fruit, from all parts of the world, and a profusion of the most delicious wines. NEMORENSIS,

To be continued.

To the Editor of the Belfast Magazine.

SIR,

I AM your constant Reader, and fond of exploring and discovering the antiquities of Ulster, and perceiv-